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EDITOR: JOHN GARRETT · 17 ROUTE DE MALAGNOU · GENEVA · SWITZERLAND
TEL. 36 71 30 · CABLES OIKOUMENE U.S. ENQUIRIES: 156 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK 10, N. Y., USA

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Ceylon Christian Council Speaks on Emergency

(Colombo) - The National Christian Council of Ceylon has called on the nation and "especially all Christians" to "do whatever we can to restore peace and good will... and to help to stop the present violence committed in the name of one's race".

The action followed the outbreak of violence between Tamil and Sinhalese speaking groups in Ceylon. The dispute centres around demands of the minority Tamil group that their language again be given equal status with Sinhalese. The present government was elected two years ago on the promise that Sinhalese would be made the only official language in Ceylon.

At its meeting on May 28, two days after the first Sinhalese attacks on Tamil property, the Executive Committee of the National Christian Council issued a message saying: "The nation as a whole stands in dismay and grief today at the wounds it has suffered as a result of the forces of violence which have been let loose in many parts of our land, and we of the Christian community represented by the National Christian Council, as part of the nation, express our grief and penitence for all that has contributed to the present sad situation. We should, therefore, all do whatever we can to restore peace and good will in our respective spheres and to help to stop the present violence committed in the name of one's race."

The council listed four recommendations and "appealed to our brethren" to give some thought to them as ways "by which we can help our countrymen at this time irrespective of distinctions of race and creed".

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Among the suggestions: "That we do all that is in our power to show good will to our neighbours, especially to any who are in distress or fear, acting as far as possible in cooperation with the local authorities, and any constituted relief organisations; that we abstain from all conversation which may encourage fear or stimulate communal passion; that we support the authorities in their arduous duty in restoring and maintaining law and order; that we study to be quiet in mind and spirit in dependence upon God."

Commenting on the situation, the council pointed out that "there are many Tamils who deplore the excesses of the Federalists (who advocate a federal system for the two language groups) and many Sinhalese who deplore the violent racialism of the Buddhist Monks' United Front", and urged the mobilisation of "this majority group in all communities to give forceful voice to the counsels of moderation... At whatever cost in popularity and misunderstanding our Tamil and Sinhalese Christian leaders must maintain conversation and, drawing with them men of good will in all religious groups, make the voice of reason and good will heard".

The council also urged the Christian community to take active steps to express its fellowship to the people of other communities. "There is not much a minority Christian community can do at such times to influence government policy, or to restrain lawlessness, but it can bear its witness by the vigorous expression of loving our neighbour."

Recent reports from Ceylon say that homeless refugees are fleeing from the south to the north and from the north to the south. In Jaffna, which is located in the north, there are 2,500 destitute Tamil refugees. At the same time there are also nearly 10,000 Tamils in Jaffna who have had to leave Colombo, but who have family or friends in Jaffna. A group of 2,100 Sinhalese refugees from Jaffna have had to go to Colombo. Present reports say that two "sets" of mobs have been operating in the Sinhalese part of Ceylon. One set has attacked Tamil homes and assaulted Tamils, killing more than two hundred. The second mob is reported to have broken into Tamil homes, after the owners had been driven off, and stolen all the possessions. In Jaffna, a Tamil mob has burned all the possessions of the 2,100 Sinhalese living there, but no one was seriously injured.

The Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches is investigating ways in which it can help in the present situation.

E.P.S., Geneva

South African Conference Postponed

(Cape Town) - The All-Church Conference scheduled for December in Cape Town to discuss fundamental differences among South African churches has been indefinitely postponed as the result of a controversy revolving around criticism made of the Dutch Reformed Church's apartheid policy by Anglican Archbishop Joost de Blank of Cape Town while in the USA (see EPS No. 24).

The committee which was arranging the conference recommended the postponement. After Archbishop de Blank's sermon in New York City criticising the Dutch Reformed policy, the Dutch Reformed Church announced its withdrawal from the conference.

E.P.S., Geneva

Hungarian Bishop Deszery to Be Reinstated?

Reports in "Evangelikus Elet", church paper of Hungarian Lutheranism, say that the council of the Southern Diocese of the Hungarian Lutheran Church has asked for an investigation by the state of the legal position of former bishop Laszlo Deszery, who resigned his post as head of the diocese at the time of the reinstatement of Bishop Lajos Ordass in the autumn of 1956.

Bishop Ordass is now reported to be living at home, but continues as head of the diocese. The meeting of the diocesan council, not called by Bishop Ordass, but by Lay Inspector Josef Darvas, who was not active in the church for a year after the "events of autumn 1956", asked the state to say whether it had ever legally accepted Bishop Ordass's reappointment as bishop in 1956 and whether it legally recognised as valid all the grounds on which Laszlo Deszery resigned.

The diocesan council asked the state to "decide on the question about Bishop Laszlo Deszery first".

Bishop Ordass has recently been submitted to mounting criticism in the publications of his own church. He is said to have taken a pro-western and "high church" line, and to be politically and theologically suspect (see EPS No. 19).

E.P.S., Geneva

In Brief

Thirteen Methodist leaders will make an eight-day tour of the Soviet Union in August. Leading the group will be Dr. T. Otto Nall of Chicago, editor of "The New Christian Advocate", while others making the trip will include Bishop and Mrs. Ivan Lee Holt of St. Louis, Missouri, Bishop Odd Hagen, Stockholm, Sweden, and Bishop Friedrich Wunderlich of Frankfurt, Germany.

* *

Bishop Hanns Lilje of Germany has been appointed Harry Emerson Fosdick Visiting Professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York for the second semester of the academic year 1958-59.

* *

Six candidates have been nominated by pastors in the two dioceses of the Church of Sweden to succeed Archbishop Yngve Brilioth of Uppsala and Bishop Anders Nygren of Lund, who are retiring this year. Under Swedish Church Law, three candidates must be named for each bishopric and then submitted to the Crown for final decision. The candidates to succeed Archbishop Brilioth are Bishop Gunnar Hultgren, Bishop Torsten Ysander and Bishop Helge Ljungberg. Nominated to follow Bishop Nygren are the Rev. Ragnar K.F. Askmark, the Rev. Nils Bolander and Rector Martin Lindström.

* *

The Rev. Roland Koh, a Chinese missionary in Malaya, was consecrated this month in Canterbury Cathedral as Assistant Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Singapore. Bishop Koh was the first Chinese national ever to be consecrated in England's leading cathedral.

* *

The Rev. William J. Nottingham, a minister of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) in the United States has been named to a three-year term with CIMADE, the French ecumenical service agency with headquarters in Paris.

* *

Miss Madeleine Barot, executive secretary of the World Council of Churches' Department on the Cooperation of Men and Women in Church and Society, delivered the fourth annual lecture at the John Knox House, Geneva student and conference centre of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, on June 13. Her subject was "Concrete Ecumenical Experiences".

* *

Patriarch Alexander Tahan, 89, head of the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church, died in Damascus, Syria, this month following a surgical operation. Patriarch Alexander had spiritual jurisdiction over 550,000 Greek Orthodox in Syria, Lebanon and North and South America. He was a native of Damascus and studied in Istanbul, Turkey, and Kiev, Russia.

* *

Dr. John M. Stensvaag, dean of Augsburg Theological Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has been elected president of the Lutheran Free Church. He succeeds Dr. T.O. Burntvedt, who retires on October 1 after holding the post for 28 years.

* *

Sixty students from colleges throughout the United States will tour Africa this summer in an inter-faith interracial project led by a prominent New York City Presbyterian Pastor, the Rev. James H. Robinson, and a Jewish rabbi, Dr. Israel Mowshowitz. Tour members will be divided into five groups and will spend six weeks in Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, the French Cameroons and Nigeria, meeting with African students.

* *

A new Roman Catholic missionary quarterly, "Parole et Mission" (Word and Mission) is appearing in Paris under the sponsorship of the publishing house "Editions du Cerf".

* *

On June 25 the University of Athens celebrated the completion of forty-five years of theological work and thirty-five years as professor of the university's theological faculty by the Greek ecumenical leader Professor Hamilcar Alivisatos. The celebration included a eulogy by the Archbishop of Athens and the presentation of a commemorative book from students, friends and colleagues by a former pupil, the Archbishop of Cyprus.

* *

Showing of the film "Martin Luther" has been prevented by the Kenya government's censorship board on the ground that it would have "grave unsettling effects on primitive audiences which might lead to breaches of the peace" and would disturb good relations between the Christian communities working in Kenya and Uganda.

* *

Father Raymond Raynes, until recently superior of the Anglican Community of the Resurrection, died in hospital in England on June 12. Father Raynes, who was active in building up the work of the community in South Africa, was a delegate of the Church of England at the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1954.

* *

Cardinal Gregorio Agaginian, the Armenian Patriarch, has been appointed by Pope Pius XII as pro-prefect of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, succeeding the late Cardinal Stritch. Cardinal Agaginian was born in Georgia, in the Caucasus; he attended the seminary for Catholic priests at Tiflis and was later called to Rome, where he occupied the position of assistant director of the papal Armenian college, and lectured on Dogmatics. Cardinal Agaginian has paid several visits to North and South America, Australia and the Near East. He speaks eleven languages, and is the first representative of the Eastern Church united with Rome to be appointed a cardinal at the Papal Court.

* *

Mr. Friedrich Schumacher, the representative of the World Council of Churches in Austria, has received the gold medal of the Austrian Republic, in recognition of the many years of service which he has given to helping refugees.

* *

At a festival service held in the church at Karlshorst, East Berlin, Bishop Otto Dibelius stressed the ties between Protestants and Catholics in Eastern Germany. He reminded the congregation of the common struggle confronting both groups, and said "in Eastern Germany we stand side by side with the Catholic Christians against the foe". Bishop Dibelius also urged his congregation to offer hospitality to Catholics attending this year's Catholic Congress, reminding them of the hospitality extended by Catholics during the Protestant Kirchentag in 1951. E.P.S., Geneva

A Special Report

Lambeth Conference Opens on July 3

The diocesan bishops of the Anglican communion have been invited to attend the ninth Lambeth Conference, a world-wide meeting to be held in Lambeth Palace, London, during July. The Lambeth Conferences provide a centre of thought and strategy for the many particular or national Anglican churches in various parts of the world. The Archbishop of Canterbury personally issues the call to Lambeth, which has become the meeting place of widely diversified points of view within Anglicanism. Their unifying features are communion with the see of Canterbury and recognition of the Book of Common Prayer as embodying "the Catholic and apostolic faith".

Lambeth has no legislative power, but the authority of its full reports is considerable. As the national churches evolve their own policies they attach great importance to the "persuasive guidance" they receive from the bishops.

The present Lambeth meeting, following those already held in 1867, 1878, 1888, 1897, 1908, 1920, 1930 and 1948, will be attended by about 350 bishops. In addition to diocesan bishops, some suffragan and assistant bishops have been invited from India and Africa. The importance of the growing autonomy and indigenous leadership of the "younger" missionary churches is thus underlined. The "pilgrimage" of bishops has grown in numbers with each Lambeth meeting. In 1867 the conference was attended by seventy-six. This year the number expected, about 350, is a record.

One of the delegations that will draw the interest of press, radio, television and the general public is from China. The six Chinese Anglican bishops, including Bishop K.H. Ting, who attended meetings of the Lambeth Consultative Committee in mid-1956 in London, will be followed attentively, because what they say will have an important bearing on the future relationship between the churches in Communist China and their sister churches in other parts of the world.

A large delegation, which has in recent Lambeth Conferences been very active, comes from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA.

Four representatives of the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church will take part in informal conversations with Anglican bishops at the beginning of the conference. They are Metropolitan Pitirim of Minsk and Byelorussia, Bishop Mihail of Smolensk and Dorogobugh, Rector K.L. Rushitsky of the Moscow Theological Academy, and Professor N.D. Uspensky of the Leningrad Theological Academy. There have, in recent years, been theological conversations in Russia between the Church of England and the Moscow Patriarchate. Russian church leaders have also visited England under the leadership of Metropolitan Nikolai, head of the external affairs office of the Moscow Church. These

visits, taking place since the last Lambeth meeting in 1948, lend special interest to the subject of future relationships with Orthodox churches. Invitations to take part in these preliminary conversations have also been accepted by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Church of Greece, which will send Metropolitan Panteleimon of Thessalonica, and by the Patriarch of Alexandria and Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus. Archbishop Makarios announced on June 24 that he was unable to attend, but designated Archbishop Athenagoras of London, exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in Western Europe, to represent him.

After an opening service in Canterbury Cathedral on July 3, the bishops will meet in private, first in full session, afterwards in committees, and finally, before the closing service in Westminster Abbey on August 10, again in full session to approve reports and a message to the churches.

Five main subjects have been set down for consideration and report.

For the first time the bishops will make a declaration on "The Holy Bible - Its Authority and Message". Though previous Lambeth Conferences have considered aspects of the Bible and Christian doctrine, this will be the first time the authority of the Bible will have been dealt with as such.

"Church Unity and the Church Universal" will provide opportunity for a statement on the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches, but keen expectation has been aroused by the discussions under this heading on the attitude of the bishops toward eventual full intercommunion between Anglican churches and the Church of South India. The Church of India, Burma and Ceylon will also be seeking guidance about the terms on which it may enter into proposed unions with non-episcopal churches in Ceylon and in North India and Pakistan. The attitude of Lambeth to the proposals recently put forward about introducing presbyterian features into episcopal churches (and vice-versa) in England and Scotland is being much discussed.

Under the heading "Progress in the Anglican Communion", strategy for missions Prayer Book revision and recruitment for the ministry will be studied.

When they consider "The Reconciling of Conflicts between and within Nations" the "Lambeth fathers" will be urged to speak on two problems now largely in the public eye: the future use of atomic energy and racial conflicts.

Reports to be presented on the last subject, "The Family in Modern Society", have already indicated that the section dealing with it will have to struggle with controversial questions of the "population explosion" in the "emerging continents" and the Christian attitude toward methods of birth control.

As the Anglican churches and their bishops present a wide spectrum of views, from militant Protestantism to definite Catholicism, from those of Chinese and Indian citizens to those of Canadians and Americans, lively debate is expected in the closed meetings, and the statements made by "Lambeth 1958" will be eagerly awaited in many churches and countries. E.P.S., Geneva

Warsaw's Trinity Church Rededicated

(Warsaw) - On Sunday, June 22, Trinity Lutheran Church, the largest Protestant church in Poland, was restored to its original purpose, 19 years after being bombed at the beginning of the second world war. The consecration ceremony of the church, which is in the centre of the city, was performed by Bishop Hanns Lilje, presiding bishop of the Evangelical-Lutheran churches in Germany, and was attended by Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, and Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, president of the Lutheran World Federation. The festival was also attended by church representatives from nearly all the countries of Western and Eastern Europe, and by Christians from all over Poland.

Addressing a congregation of 5,000 people, Pastor Heinrich Hellstern of Switzerland said this reconsecration (181 years after the original consecration of the church in 1777) was proof that "Protestantism is alive in Eastern Europe". During the service, however, he expressed the fear that "the number of Protestants in Eastern Europe might fall too low". Dr. Fry reminded the Polish Protestants that "our lives today are filled with fear. But thank God," he said, "for a house in which you can speak with Him and He with you. Our task today is to listen and to testify."

Representatives of churches from abroad and clergy of the Polish Ecumenical Council - including Orthodox Archbishop Timotheus of Bielystok - walked in a long procession round the circular edifice, which was packed with people right up to the dome. After handing over the keys to Bishop Kotula, Lutheran Bishop of Poland, Bishop Lilje performed the ceremony of consecration. He reminded the congregation of the building of the Temple of Solomon: "People from many countries and confessions are here to testify that the living God is their Lord, that He is good and merciful, and that in a world threatened by destruction, discontent and hatred the goodness of God in Christ is the only thing which preserves the real life of the world." With singing by the choir, congregational hymns, and greetings in ten languages from the member churches of the World Council of Churches, the church was consecrated once again "to God, the Three in One".

Polish Government Receives Ecumenical Representatives

During the first days of the ecumenical gathering in Warsaw, Minister Stachelski, director of the Department of Church Affairs in Poland, received representatives of the ecumenical movement.

Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the WCC, stated that he considered it particularly important to strengthen contacts between the churches in Western and Eastern Europe. In the present difficult political situation, he declared, it was a good thing that representatives of the churches in the two camps should meet to heal the divisions.

Minister Stachelski stressed the fact that religious freedom in Poland was not guaranteed merely for reasons of propaganda. The state also derived benefit from this freedom. Of course, in some circumstances this freedom must be restricted. He referred to the political tendencies of certain churches. If a church were untrue to its own nature and started dabbling in politics, which had nothing to do with a church, this was bound to lead to conflicts and misunderstandings, like those which had arisen in Poland, though not with the Protestant churches.

Bishop Lilje stressed the fact that the church of Jesus Christ had never considered it its task to give the nations political advice. But it was its duty to take action to promote peace and welfare in the spirit of Christ's message.

Conference of European Churches to Meet in January

As a result of conversations in Warsaw, a conference of non-Roman Catholic European churches will be held in Switzerland at the end of January 1959. The churches participating will meet on their own initiative, but with the full support of the World Council of Churches. Representatives of the Continuation Committee of the provisional "Liselund" Conference of European Churches and Bishop Hanns Lilje, as spokesman for German Lutheran churches, took part in the conversations (see EPS No. 22, 1957).

Responsibility for the conference is in the hands of Dr. Egbert Emmen of the Netherlands, as secretary, Archbishop Kiivit of Estonia and Bishop Lilje of Germany, together with the two European presidents of the World Council of Churches, Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin and Dr. John Baillie of Edinburgh.

At the consecration of Trinity Church, Warsaw, Dr. Ernst Wilm, president of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, stated that in Europe, divided into two camps in a cold war, it is the duty of Christians to bridge the gulfs as far as possible. He said that this task in future should no longer be assumed by "partisans" or separate groups; all the non-Roman Catholic churches in Europe on both sides of the Iron Curtain should seek this contact.

Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council of Churches said during the Warsaw meetings: "We Christians in Europe must stick together. We are engaged in re-examining our consciences." He added that the ecumenical gathering in Warsaw had given new and sound impulses for strengthening the ecumenical movement in Europe.

E.P.S., Geneva

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